

Our Bodies and Gender

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- [0 : 00] And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds, livestock and creeping things, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds. And it was so.
- And God made the beast of the earth according to their kinds, and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
- Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.
- So God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.
- The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.
- [1 : 22] For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. Then the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him.
- Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.
- The man gave names to all livestock, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him.
- So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. And while he slept, while he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.
- And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.
- [2 : 29] She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
- And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Hey, let me pray for us, and then let's dive in. Heavenly Father, as we say almost every week, God, we want to be a church which is hearing you speak to us from your word.
- God, in a subject about gender and our bodies, which is so complicated, in which our culture has so much to say, and yet it's so confused. God, we really want to hear from you.
- Father, I pray that what I have to say, God, will truly represent your heart. God, if there's anything that is not of you, I pray it will fall in deaf ears.

I pray it won't take any root in our hearts. But God, if we are able to truly extrapolate what your word is saying, then God, I pray let your seeds go deep in our hearts. God, we live in a time in which the tides and the current are so ferocious, and are changing so quickly.

[3 : 41] We need an anchor for us all. We need a word that has lasted throughout the generations. And so come and speak to us, I pray, God. May we know your heart. God, bring clarity and compassion to us today.

Let your word speak to us, we pray. Pray this in your great and gracious name. Amen. Amen. If you are new to church this morning, my name is Kevin, and it's great to have you with us this morning.

Now, today is the last sermon in a series on our physical bodies. For the last five weeks, we've been doing the series on the body and what the Bible has to say about our bodies.

And as Neil pointed out last week, we've been following the storyline of the Bible. I don't know if you've picked that up. The Bible is not just a random teaching, a bunch of teachings. It is a storyline.

It starts with creation and then fall and then redemption and then restoration, resurrection one day. And the storyline we've been following in the series has followed that same storyline.

[4 : 43] And so we looked at the fact that our bodies, our physical bodies are wonderfully and fearfully made, created by God, not arbitrary, made by God. But then we also looked at the fact that our bodies are fallen.

Ever since sin entered the world, all of creation has been corrupted, including our physical bodies. And so the way we think is out of line with how God is designed, the way our bodies feel, the way our bodies behave.

We are subject to sin and death and decay and disease. Our bodies don't work the way that they were meant to. The fall happened. But then last week, we saw one day our bodies are going to be resurrected in the new creation.

And we're going to have glorious, wonderful bodies in the new bodies in the new creation. So creation for resurrection. And how should we live between now and the resurrection?

Well, over the series, we've seen three things. We've seen that we should recognize that our identity isn't primarily found in our physical bodies. What people say about us, what culture says about us, what social media says about us, that's not primarily who you are.

[5 : 48] Our identity is rooted in who God says we are. Now, we've seen also that we should use our bodies for worship and service. Offer our bodies a living sacrifice in worship of God and service of others.

And then last week we said, we should live our lives now in this world in light of the world to come. Okay, so that's where we've been so far. Well, today we're in the final one and we're going to look at the subject of our bodies and gender.

Our bodies and gender. Now, just to quickly point out before we dive in, there's two books on the piano I want to recommend to you. The one is called, we've been promoting this the whole time, What God Has to Say About Our Bodies by Sam Albury.

This is a book called When Harry Became Sally. It's a book written about the transgender movement. A very good book. I want to encourage you to take a look at both of those.

Okay. Our bodies and gender. This is a topic which there has been many books, articles, social media posts, tweets, blogs written about.

[6 : 51] And as the saying goes, it's a topic that has created more heat than light. In other words, more friction, more conflict than actually understanding. In 1992, the American author and counselor, John Gray, wrote the very famous book, Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus.

And he's tried to explain and bring some kind of understanding to the confusion we feel between the genders. Well, in the last 30 years or so, unfortunately, despite an ocean of books and podcasts and blogs and articles, the confusion has not dissipated at all.

And on the confusion, the disorientation only seems to have increased. And so today, the fundamental questions we ask are not so much, what are the differences between the gender, male and female, but are there any differences at all?

Is it, is gender simply a social construct? Is it possible to be a man trapped in a woman's body or vice versa? Or is gender merely just an evolutionary process for the propagation of the human race, but nothing more than that?

And of course, if you have been following the Olympic Games, you'll know a lot of the stories and the news, the controversy about gender and the Olympic Games, the sports and transgender athletes competing.

[8 : 08] Well, we want to think carefully about this, right? As Christians, we believe that the Bible is not only authoritative, it's also sufficient. That means the Bible is sufficient to speak to the most important areas of life.

Now, the Bible doesn't tell us everything there is to know about the whole world. The Bible doesn't tell us how to make pork dumplings or change a tire on a car, but the Bible does tell us everything we need to know to live flourishing lives as created beings in God's created world.

And so what does God in His Word have to say about our bodies and gender? Well, this morning I want us to look at three things. And the first one is this. Gender is intentionally designed.

Gender is intentionally designed. I don't know if you, I don't know what you feel about the movie Crazy Rich Asians. That title might offend you.

It came out a few years ago. There's a line in that movie where one of the characters, the lady I think, turns to a guy called Matthew, and she says in that book, I think we've got in the movie, it's not my job to make you feel like a man.

[9 : 15] I can't make you something that you're not. It's a great dig, it's a great chirp, but is it true? Is it true? It's not my job to make you feel like a man. I can't make you something that you're not.

How do we feel about gender and who we are? The Bible in Genesis 1 that Rachel read to us is very clear that in Scripture, we have these two genders, male and female, and God's creation of them are neither arbitrary nor incidental, but they are intentionally designed and planned by the all-wise God for our well-being.

Many scholars have pointed out that in the creation narrative, in Genesis 1 in particular, is full of these corresponding pairs, complementary parts that go together.

So for instance, in Genesis 1, you have heaven and earth, you have light and darkness, you have day and night, you have land and sea, these complementary corresponding parts that go together.

One author said it like this, it is part of the brilliance of God's creation that diverse, unlike things, are made to unite and create dynamic wholes, which generate more life and beauty through their relationship.

[10 : 30] Okay, so God brings these diverse pairs together, and together they create life. And of course, the climax of God's creation is these beings that He makes in His image, these corresponding pairs of male and female.

Ray Orton says it like this, both male and female display the glory of God with equal brilliance, animal reproduction is assumed, whereas human gender distinction is celebrated.

That's what we read in chapter 1. Look at it with me again in verse 26. God says, let us make mankind in our image. All throughout creation, God has said, let there be, let there be light, let there be the heavens and the stars, let there be.

Then God says, let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Verse 27, so God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.

Now, of course, there are many distinctions that God could have made in describing His humanity. Genesis could have said, so God made mankind in His image, in the image of God He created them, Chinese and Caucasian.

[11 : 43] Tall and short. Introvert and extrovert. Smart and simple. Right? There are many distinctions. Black and white. But of course, He doesn't.

The one distinction that God makes is with respect to our gender, male and female. I think one of the obvious reasons for this is that many of those distinctions, there is a continuum.

So you get introverts, you get extroverts, you get many people in between. You get tall people, you get short people, you get many people in between. But the point of Genesis is that gender is binary.

There's not a continuum. There is a binary of male and female. Andrew Wilson explains it like this. He says, complementarity, which is the coming together of two or more different things, which improve and emphasize each other's qualities, is written into creation.

Male and female, equal in dignity, equal in value, equal in human and spiritual worth before God, are not identical. Male and female are not the same any more than heaven and earth, or day and night are the same.

[12 : 50] Genesis 1 is the story of order and life coming through separate, distinct things coming together. When the distinctions collapse, in other words, when you try to make them interchangeable, there is no life.

Life comes through beautiful difference, whereas identical pairs are as barren as a cave on earth, as desolate as Jupiter in the skies. So right from the beginning, Genesis 1, we see God's intention, the way he, within the Godhead, Father, Son, Spirit, speak amongst themselves, their intention to create these image bearers, made in his image.

And what he, his design is to make male and female, equal image bearers, equally called by God, to steward creation, to propagate the world, to look after his world, on his behalf.

And as often pointed out, throughout Genesis 1, when God creates, he says, you know, he created the stars, the heavens and the earth, and it was good. He created plants, and it was good.

He created animals, it was good. But when God makes humanity, male and female, in his image, what does he say? It is very good. It is very good. Except, I don't know if you noticed in the reading that Rachel gave us, there's one thing that is not good.

[14 : 03] Did you notice it? At the end of God creating male and female, in his image, he says, it is very good. But then look at chapter 2, in verse 18. Having said, it is good, it is good, it is very good, now God says, then the Lord God said, it is not good, that man should be alone.

So, Adam is alone, and God says, this is not good. Now, here's a question. What's the problem, with Adam's aloneness? Is it the fact, that he's lonely, and he doesn't have anybody, to help him, with household chores, at home, and he's bored?

No, it's far more profound than that. Alistair Roberts says it like this, the problem of man's aloneness, is not the psychological problem, of loneliness, but the fact, that without assistance, without Eve, humanity's purposes, cannot be achieved.

You see the point there? Adam cannot be, the person that God has called him to be, he cannot fulfill, the calling that God has got, on his life, alone.

Without Eve, he cannot do it. Now, obviously, on the one hand, he can't be fruitful, and multiply, subdue the earth, and fill it with the image, and the glory of God, right? We know that, Adam couldn't, propagate the earth.

[15 : 20] But, when we think of, Adam's aloneness, the problem, merely being procreation, we're thinking about that, from the vantage point, from which we have, already. There's no indication, in the Bible, that God couldn't have, come up with a way, for Adam alone, to single handedly, recreate, propagate.

And we know now, that he needed a wife, he needed a female, but that's because, that's how God's designed it. But God could have designed, that Adam alone, could have recreated, and propagated, and filled the earth.

But the point is here, it's not just procreation, everything that God, called Adam to do, he couldn't do on his own. He needed, someone who was like him, and yet unlike him, someone who was equal, and yet different, to help him fulfill, the calling that God had from him.

So, fulfill the calling of, to care for, and keep, and cultivate creation, to be God's image bearer, on the earth, to image God's relationship, with humanity.

In other words, our gendered sexuality, is not merely functional, for the sake of procreation, it's God's good design, to help us, understand something, about him, to understand something, about the gospels, as the new testament says, to learn from one another, to work together, to fulfill our mandate, as human beings.

[16 : 39] So, one of the ways, that we see this, is that the way, that God speaks, in the plurality, about himself, and the trinity, and his making mankind, in his image. For instance, God says this, he says, let us, the trinity God, trinitarian God, make mankind, male and female, in our image, rather than God saying, let me, make mankind, in my image.

It's one of the only places, in the bible, where God speaks about himself, is us, in the plural. Why? Because part of the, equality, and yet diversity, of the genders, is meant to reflect, something of the equality, and yet the diversity, of the trinity.

Our genders, is meant to image, something of who God is, and in the new testament, it tells us, image something of the gospel, and how we relate to God. Now, some people would say, okay, well obviously, men and women are, are psychologically different, we're anatomically different, okay, women have wombs, men don't have wombs, our genitalia is different, for the purposes of reproduction, okay, obviously, but beyond that, aren't men and women, essentially identical?

Aren't they interchangeable? Why can't, you be a man, trapped in a woman's body, and vice versa? And, some Christians, have even made this argument, and they'll point to Galatians 3, verse 28, look at it on the slide with me, in the new testament, the apostle Paul writes this, he says, for as many of you, were baptized into Christ, you've put on Christ, there's neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all, one in Christ Jesus.

What is the apostle Paul, saying here? Paul here, Paul here is talking about, the wonder of the gospel, he's talking about salvation, he's talking about righteousness, he's talking about, our justification before God, he's talking about the, the wonderful thing, that the only thing, that matters, for diverse people, from different cultures, and backgrounds, and ethnicities, and genders, and socio-economic, statuses in society, the only thing, that really matters, as to whether, you will be part of God's family, and loved by God, and know God, and part of his kingdom, and saved for all eternity, the only thing that matters is, what do you do with Jesus?

[19 : 04] Do you know Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Have you come to surrender, and bow down to Jesus? In the ancient world, most Jewish men, would every morning, pray, say God, I thank you, that I'm not a woman, I'm not a slave, I'm not a Gentile, and Paul writes in, and says Jesus, obliterates all those things, Jesus now says, you can be, a Gentile, female, slave, and you're on equal status, before God, with every other being, in the human, in the planet, it doesn't matter, how rich or poor you are, it doesn't matter, how smart or simple you are, educated, uneducated, it doesn't matter who you are, the only thing that matters, is do you know Jesus?

What gets you a seat, at God's table, is not your genetics, or your chromosomes, but grace, grace, that's his point, but if you become a Christian, that doesn't change, the ontological realities, of who you are, when you become a Christian, you don't become non-Chinese, right, as if somehow you're just, a human, or a Christian, I don't become Chinese, when I become a Christian, I'm still South African, as much as I think, I'm a Hong Konger, the truth is, I'm still South African, and this is wonderful news, because in a culture, like Hong Kong, which is so performance, orientated, in such a meritocracy, full of comparisons, Jesus levels, the playing fields, and he welcomes, all who would, trust in him, but coming to Christ, doesn't change, the ontological realities, of our being, it doesn't make you, non-gendered, you're still a male, you're still a female, you're still Gentile, you're still, an employer, an employee, and this leads, to the second point, that we make today, which is that, gender is not only,

God's intentional design, it's biologically grounded, biologically grounded, again, think of that comment, from Crazy Rich Asians, I cannot make you something, that you are not, I cannot make you feel, a certain way, now, nine years ago, in July 2019, Vanity Fair, very famously, the cover, had a picture, of a middle-aged woman, with the title, underneath it said, call me Caitlin, right, and the thing, that was astonishing, about this cover, was that the person, on the front, was the Olympic athlete, Bruce Jenner, who had transitioned, to being a trans woman, and now, wanted to be called, Caitlin, in 2015, this was astonishing news, in 2024, this feels like, old news, right, now, for some of us, the idea, of gender confusion, gender dysphoria, is not just, a theoretical concept, for some of us, maybe personally, we struggle, with our own gender, our own feelings, of maybe dysphoria, feeling uncomfortable, in our own bodies, maybe some of us here, have loved ones, family members, colleagues, friends, that struggle, with gender dysphoria, with same sex attraction, with being intersex conditions, maybe, maybe some of us, have no loved ones, or have loved ones, that have transitioned, and changed, their gender, what does God's word, say about this, one of the things, we see in Genesis 1, is that, when God talks about, being male, and female, he's talking us, being physically male, and female, all through Genesis 1,

God is physically, forming, and filling, creation, God makes, physical land, and physical seas, he makes physical plants, and physical animals, he makes a physical sun, a physical moon, physical stars, when God announces, his intention, to make human beings, male and female, he is not, as one author put it, talking about a concept, of maleness, or femaleness, that is distinct, from our physical reality, now one of the points, that I think, I've been trying to make here, is that our gender, is not simply, biology, it's much more than that, but it's also, nothing less than that, it is as, Sam Aubrey, remarkably, succinctly, succinctly, put it like this, he said, maleness and femaleness, are physically grounded, not psychologically, determined, our gender identity, is not something, we look for in our feelings, it's something we find, in our bodies, and we could add to that, that gender identity, is not something we discover, by looking at social settings, or social norms, as if all men, behave a certain way, therefore this is what it means, to be masculine, or all women, behave a certain way, this is what it means, to be feminine, of course not, but the point here, is that gender, is biologically grounded, not psychologically, determined, amazingly,

God has so designed, our bodies, that our gender, is coded, into every one, of our 30 trillion cells, within our DNA, our DNA strands, and every one of our, 30 trillion cells, is coded, part of our DNA, with our chromosomes, hormones, a few years ago, I told you the story, three years ago, of Laura, Laura Perry, who was an American, a lady, who transitioned, to a man, she called herself, Jack, and this is what she says, the day after her surgery, she says, after my surgery, sorry, not the day, I think it was about a week, or a month after her surgery, she says, after my surgery, even though I liked the results, I liked how I looked physically, I realized the surgery, hadn't made me a man, I was legally a man, I could look down, at my ID card, that said male, but I came to realize, I was still, the same person, and that was a devastating blow, to me, because I really had believed, that I could become, a man, our gender identity, doesn't matter, what hormone treatment, you take, it doesn't matter, what your ID card say, it doesn't matter, what surgery you have, or how you socially transition, our gender identity, is coded into our DNA, it's very part of who we are, it's biologically grounded, and no treatment, is going to change that, it is who God has made us, now up until 30 years ago, so all that we would have said, would have been highly unremarkable, everyone said, yeah, well obviously, what's the big deal, but of course, culture has taken a massive turn, on the subject, and today we feel, that gender really is, psychologically determined, based on how we feel, now the Bible says, that feelings, are very important part, of who we are, they are not, to be minimized, they're not unimportant, they're an important part, of who we are, but our feelings, are not authoritative, they're not ultimately, determine what's true,

[26 : 05] God's word, is our authority, and the Bible's clear teaching, both here and throughout scripture, is that a person's, biological sex, reveals, and determines, their objective gender, what gender in fact, they are, as well as, how's God called them to live, as gendered beings, in a physical world, now here's a question, how do we think, or how are we, for those of us, that are Christians, how are we to think, about those that struggle, with gender dysphoria, or intersex conditions, well I think, there are at least, three things, that we need to think about, the first is this, we need to, think about those, that struggle, with intersex conditions, or gender dysphoria, with deep compassion, and sympathy, not with simplistic, or tried answers, the reality is that, depending on the data, up to 1% of people, or 0.08% of people, experience intersex conditions, which means that, their biology, doesn't neatly fit, into one category, of the gender binary, or the other, and the reality is that, for those that struggle, with this, this is a deeply, deeply painful, traumatic, and difficult experience, and as Christians, sometimes Christians, in the past, have given just very, trite and simplistic answers, and yet we, that's not helpful, we need to be, deeply compassionate, we need to empathize, and sympathize, with those who are struggling, we need to emulate, the compassion of Christ, who moved towards, people in his age, a day that were often, outcasts, or ostracized, from society, and moved towards them, with compassion, we need to do the same, so the first thing is, we need to move towards, people with compassion, we need to welcome, and love those, that are struggling, those that are finding it hard, those that are grappling, with maybe their gender, or their bodies, the second thing is this, our biblical theology, should tell us, not to be surprised, at the anomalies, that we find in society, as respect to, the gender binary, what I mean by that, is this, what does Neil, speak about three weeks, three weeks ago, our biblical theology, tells us, that since sin, entered the world, the world is fallen, the world is broken, and every part, of our humanity, our bodies, our minds, our souls, every part, of our humanity, has been affected, and broken, by the fall, so psychologically, we don't think, the way that we meant to think, we don't think,

God's thoughts, over him, after him, our bodies, are broken, are subject to, sickness, and disease, and death, and strange feelings, our souls, and spirits, are dead to God, we don't know God, every part, of our humanity, has been affected, by the fall, and so, same sex attraction, gender dysphoria, intersex phenomena, are painful examples, of the way that, God's good, and beautiful design, has become distorted, broken, in our world, and yet, however much sin, has spoiled, our understanding, or experience, and what it means, to be male, or female, it hasn't dismantled, the distinction, between the sexes, it hasn't created, a third gender, and so, our biblical theology, tells us not to be surprised, but then the third thing, we need to think about, is this, how did Jesus, think about this, how did Jesus think, and what we see, when we see Jesus, in the gospels, is that Jesus, handled this, with two things, with compassion, and with clarity, in Matthew 19, some people come to Jesus, and they ask him, about marriage, and divorce, and Jesus, in answering them, goes back, not to Genesis 2, the first marriage, but to Genesis 1, to the creation, of male and female, listen to what he says,

Genesis 19, Jesus says this, have you not read, that God, who created them, from the beginning, made them male, and female, and he said, a man shall leave, his father and mother, and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh, so Jesus here, affirms, the binary nature, of our sexual identities, Jesus Christ, who is known, as the most gracious, and compassionate, and welcoming, of all people, doesn't confuse the matter, but brings clarity, about the binary nature, of gender identity, but then remarkably, Jesus goes on, to speak with compassion, to those that struggle, because he goes on, to talk about eunuchs, a eunuch, is somebody who, generally a male, who's been castrated, that means their, male genitalia, is being removed, and this often happened, because kings, or emperors, didn't want those, that were serving, in their courts, to mess around, with his wives, or his daughters, or the female servants, and so males, would be castrated, and Jesus says this, in Matthew 19, he says, there are some eunuchs, that have been made so, by men, he's talking about that, incident, he says, there are some people, that have chosen, the life of a eunuch, for the sake of the kingdom, they've chosen, not to have children, to devote themselves, to God's kingdom, and then he says, and there are some, that are eunuchs, by birth,

Jesus is recognizing, that there's some people, whose bodies, don't naturally fit, into the gender binary, but Jesus doesn't confuse, the matter, he speaks with compassion, and gentleness, and he says, even such people, we've got to welcome, we've got to love, we've got to embrace, we've got to be, tender towards them, and we should do the same, and so we live, in a broken world, gender and body dysphoria, gender confusion, pain, suffering, will exist, Jesus gets it, Jesus understands it, Jesus is not harsh, towards it, Jesus is welcoming, and friends, what that means, is this, you may struggle, with your own body, you may struggle, with your own gender, you may struggle, with your own sexuality, you've got to know, that Jesus Christ, the one who went, to the cross for you, knows it, and understands it, and is compassionate, towards it, as Dan Orton, often tells us, the posture, most natural to Jesus, is not a pointed finger, but wide open arms, saying come, and experience my grace, gender is intentionally designed, gender is biologically grounded, last thing I want to say, is this, is gender is missionally, essential, missionally essential, in 2022, so two years ago,

Rebecca McLaughlin, wrote an amazing book, Rebecca McLaughlin, is a respected, theologian, and author, and she wrote a book, called, Jesus through the eyes of women, how the first female disciples, helped us to know, and love the Lord, and in this book, one of the things, that Rebecca McLaughlin shows, is she highlights, that throughout the gospels, and the New Testament, the vital role, that women played, in the ministry, in the life of Jesus, and in the early church, now, I say that, not to be patronizing, to women, or to say, oh you know, women you've also got a role, in God's kingdom, but often, as men, often when we read the Bible, when we think of Jesus, and his disciples, who do we often think about?

[33 : 26] We think about the 12 disciples, and the 12 apostles, right? That's generally what you think about. But Rebecca McLaughlin shows, that actually, at every, throughout the ministry of Jesus, and especially, at all the critical, elements of Jesus life, his birth, his death, his resurrection, prominent, in all of those roles, is the role of women.

And her point is, that the life, and the ministry, the ministry of Jesus, and the ministry, of the early church, almost, you almost could say, wouldn't happen, certainly wouldn't have been the same, without both genders, equally involved, male and female.

She writes this, she says, if we work our way through, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and we cut out, we discard, we tear out of our Bibles, all the scenes, where women play no role, where women aren't involved, and don't have a role, actually, we would tear out, very little of our Bibles.

In other words, most of the New Testament, almost every page, somewhere in there, you see the vital role, in which women are playing, to the ministry of Jesus. That's her point. Conversely, she says, cut out all the roles, that women do play, and the Gospels, and we'd have, in the Gospels, we'd have some real problems.

And she goes on, to show how Christ's life, was witnessed, testified to, and sometimes even enabled, by the many female followers. And we see this, throughout the rest, of the New Testament, the vital role, that both men and women, male and female, play in the expansion, of the Gospel.

[34 : 57] Most of us know, the missionary work, of Paul, and Barnabas, the sermons, of Stephen, and Peter. But what about, the teamwork, of Aquila, and Priscilla? There's husband and wife, couple that, plant and host, churches, in three of the major cities, of the world, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome.

What about, people like Chloe, host the church, in her home? Or Lydia, who helped establish, the church in Philippi, one of the leading churches, in the New Testament. Or people like, Yodi, and Tiki, who Paul says, labored side by side, with me for the Gospel, together with Clement, and the rest of my fellow workers.

Or consider, Paul's letter to Titus, where he says, older women, and older men, are needed in the church, so train them, to do the work of ministry. Or Paul's words, to Timothy, where he says, train older men, and older women, to teach the younger men, and the younger women, in the church.

What's the point? The point is this, that the God of the Bible, resolutely proclaims, that yes, men and women, are equal and different. Absolutely. Not interchangeable.

Not intercollapsible. Into one and the same. Not only different, in anatomy and genitalia, but different, in who God's made us. And yet, both, Christianity says, are vitally, absolutely essential, to the mission of the church, the mission of God's kingdom, the advancement of the gospel, in this world, until Christ returns.

[36 : 23] Both, older men, and older women, younger men, and younger women, are absolutely needed, unapologetically needed, bring who they are, who Christ has made them, to say, God, here I am.

This is who you've made me. I can't be somebody else, but all that I am, and all that I have, I bring myself to you, and say, Jesus, have your way, in my life.

And so what should we do with this? How should we respond? As we close, let me, suggest this. Here's one response. For those of us that are men, in Watermark Church, I want to ask you, don't apologize for being a man.

We live in a time, when I think, men feel like, they often need to apologize, for being a man. Don't be shy, or timid. Don't be apologetic, about who God has made you. Study the Bible, study the scriptures, and see, what is it that God has called you, as a man, and if you're a Christian, as a Christian man, to be, and to do.

And then, resolutely choose, to be the most godly, humble, Christ-like man, that you can be, to serve your fellow church, to serve Christ, and his kingdom, to live on mission for him, and to be the man, that God's called you to be.

[37 : 41] But let me say, equally to the woman, don't apologize, for being a woman. Don't feel like, you're second rate citizens, in God's kingdom. Don't feel, your role in God's kingdom, is just to have babies, and fill the earth, with the image bearers of God.

That's not God's call, on you, as a woman. Study the scriptures, study the Bible. See, what is it that God, has called you to be, and then radically, unapologetically, pursue what that, what that means.

Be the most godly, Christ-like woman, that you can be, and give yourself wholeheartedly, to advance God's kingdom, to glorify God, with every part of your femininity, with all that you are, to serve God, and to serve his kingdom, and his mission on earth.

And so let me close with, Rebecca McLaughlin's words, from her book. She says this, As we meet Jesus, in the gospels, we'll encounter a man, born into scandal.

A man who further, scandalized his fellow Jews, by loving women, known by their sin. We find a man, who never had sexual relationships, but who loved women so well, that they'd leave everything, they had to follow him.

[38 : 56] In the gospels, we find a man, who turned his back, on the religiously powerful, men of his day, and had his longest, recorded private conversations, with religiously despised women. Looking through the eyes of women, Jesus lived and ministered to, and among, we see a man, who valued all people, men and women, especially those vilified, and looked down upon by others.

We should not be surprised, therefore, that all people, men and women, Caucasian, Chinese, black, Nigerian, Indian, young and old, smart, not as smart, educated, uneducated, rich, poor, all people, have been flocking, to Jesus Christ, ever since.

Friends, who is Jesus? He's the friend of sinners, he's the ally of the broken, he's the one who embraced outcasts, he's also the one, who made you, who you are, he's the one, who designed you, every part of you, he's the one, who came to earth, and died on the cross, to redeem your broken body, he's the one, who allowed his body, to be broken, so that one day, your broken body, will be redeemed, and resurrected.

Jesus is the one, who moves towards us, with infinite compassion, and grace, but also with clarity, and he's the one, who calls us, to wholeheartedly, follow him, to pick up our cross, to die to ourselves, to live for his glory, and to love others, and to serve his mission, and his kingdom, here on earth.

And as we come to him, and know him, and experience him, we'll find that in him, is life, and life to the full, even in this broken world. So let's come to him now, in prayer.

[40 : 40] Let me pray for us. Lord Jesus, we've spoken about a difficult topic, God I hope that I've represented you, and your word, and your heart well.

God it's very easy, to stand on a platform, and talk about these things, it's very hard, to live them, especially for those of us, that struggle, with issues of dysphoria, with the pain, maybe some of us have, been hurt, by others, spoken down upon, treated, badly.

God we, we come to you, and we ask you for your grace. We ask you God, to both meet us, with clarity, and compassion, God.

But God, we pray that also, you will, tell us exactly, who we are. We pray God, that we find our identity, not from social media, what Instagram has to say, Facebook has to say, but what your word says, and what you by your spirit say.

And then God, give us the conviction, to be the man, and the woman, that you've called us to be. And to live that out, wholeheartedly, unapologetically, unreservedly, for your glory.

[41 : 54] God come and meet us, we pray in this area. Speak to us. God where there's pain, and hurt, we pray once you, heal us, once you, be at work in our lives.

And finally God, make us a church, that is, full of compassion, tender. That is, gracious and welcoming. Even to those, maybe who disagree with us, we pray God, may we exhibit, and emulate, the compassion of Jesus.

We pray this, in your wonderful, and gracious name. Amen.